A SERMON

CONCERNING THE

Excellency and Uſefulneſs OF THE COMMON PRAYER.

PREACHED BY

William Beveridge, D. D.

Rector of St. *Peters Cornhil*, *London*, at the Opening of the ſaid Pariſh-Church, the 27 of *November*, 1681.

The tenth Edition.

EDINBURGH,
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To the Right Reverend Father in God

HENRY

Lord BISHOP of

LONDON,

One of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordship having signified your pleasure that the Sermon which you heard, when you did us the honour to be present at the Opening of our Parish Church, should be made publick; notwithstanding my averseness to print any thing in English, yet out of a just sense both of that Obedience which I owe to you as my Bishop

Biſhop, and of that Kindneſs which I have received from you as my Patron, I have now done it, and herewith make bold to preſent it to You. What Effect a diſcourſe of this Nature will have upon the Minds of thoſe who ſhall have ſo much patience as to read it, I know not. But muſt leave that to him who hath the hearts of all men in his hand. My Subject I am ſure is good and neceſſary: And as for my plain and practical way of handling it, it is that which my Text requireth, in that it commandeth that in our Chriſtian Congregations, All things be done to edifying. *So that unleſs I had endeavoured to ſuit it to the Capacities of all there preſent, and to make it as edifying as I could unto them, my Sermon had been a Contradiction to my Text: And beſides that, I had loſt my Deſign in Preaching it: Which was, to convince thoſe eſpecially, whoſe Souls, under your Lordſhip, are committed*

mitted to my care and conduct, of the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of Common Prayer, *and ſo to perſwade them to the conſtant and conſcientious uſe of it; not only becauſe it is conformable to the Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Practice of the Univerſal Church, nor only becauſe it is eſtabliſhed by the Laws both of our Church and State (though they alſo be very great Reaſons) but likewiſe becauſe of that extraordinary benefit and advantage which they would receive from it, for the edifying of their Souls in whatſoever is neceſſary to their Eternal Salvation.*

I am very ſenſible, that much more might have been ſaid upon this Excellent Subject. But intending no more than a plain Sermon upon the occaſion, I was forced to omit many things, and to confine my ſelf to ſuch only, which were moſt obvious, and ſeemed the moſt neceſſary for People to know and practice, in order to their being

being reconciled unto, and edified by our Publick Prayers. And if upon your peruſal of that litle which I have ſaid, you ſhall find any thing not agreeable to the Doctrine of our Church, I humbly ſubmit it to Your Lordſhips Judgment and Cenſure; only deſiring that You would be as ready to pardon, as I am to retract it.

My Lord,

I have one requeſt more to make unto You, which is, that as You was the occaſion of my printing this Sermon, ſo You would be pleaſed to accept of it, now it is printed: And if, by the Bleſſing of Almighty God, it may contribute any thing to theſe great Ends, which You continually proſecute with ſo great Wiſdom and Prudence, with ſuch exemplary Care and Diligence in the Management of that High Office which he hath called you to, even to

the

Epiſtle Dedicatory

the Glory of his great Name, the Good of his Church, and the Salvation of the Souls of Men; it is all that is deſired by,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt humble

and moſt obedient Servant,

WILLIAM BEVERIDGE.

A SERMON

Concerning the

EXCELLENCY and USEFULNESS *OF THE* Common Prayer.

I. *COR.* XIV. 26.

Let all things be done to Edifying.

WHEN *Judas Maccabeus* had new built the Altar, and repaired the Temple at *Hierusalem*, after it had been polluted and laid waste for Three Years together, the Church of God at that

time and place rejoyced ſo much at it, that they kept the Dedication of it Eight days, and ordered that the ſame ſhould be obſerved every Year; 1 *Maccab.* 4. 59. And ſo we find it was in our Saviours time: for he himſelf was pleaſed to honour that Feſtival, though only of Eccleſiaſtical Inſtitution, with his own preſence; *Joh.* 10. 22. In the like manner, we of this Pariſh have cauſe to be tranſported with joy and gladneſs and to ſpend this day in praiſing and adoring the moſt high God, for that our Church which hath lain waſte for above five times three Years, is now at laſt re-built and fitted again for his Worſhip and Service. For what the Altar and Temple were to the Jews then, the ſame will our Church be unto us now. Did they there offer up their Sacrifices to God as Types of the Death of Chriſt? We ſhall here commemorate the ſaid

Death

Death of Christ typified by those Sacrifices. Did they come from all parts of *Judea* to worship God there? So shall we, I hope, come from all parts of this Parish to Worship God here. Was the Temple an House of Prayer to them? So is this Church to us. Was that the place where God according to his promise came unto his People to Bless them? I do not doubt but he will do the same to us in this Place, if we come unto it, and carry our selves in it as we ought to do. In short, was the Temple the place where all things were performed that could any way conduce to the Edifying of Gods People, as things then stood? the same may be said of our Church, as things now stand. For whatsoever is or can be necessary to the Edifying of our Souls here, and so to their Eternal Salvation hereafter, is clearly and fully comprehended in those seve-

ſeveral Offices, which according to the Laws of the Land, are now to be performed in this Place. Neither is there any thing contained in any of them, but what doth really conduce to thoſe great Ends and Purpoſes.

But this being a thing which is denied by ſome, and underſtood but by few amongſt us, I ſhall endeavour to explain and demonſtrate it unto all. Which I chuſe to do at this time, becauſe it is the moſt proper Subject I could think of for this occaſion. For unleſs what is to be now done in this place, will anſwer the ends wherefore it is erected, all the Coſts & Charges that have been laid out upon it, will be to no purpoſe at all. But if it can be fully made out, That the Service which is here to be performed, doth highly conduce to the Advancement of Gods Glory and your Happineſs, the great

Ends

Ends wherefore ſuch places are erected, then you cannot but acknowledge that whatſoever any of you have contributed towards it, is the Beſt Money that you ever ſpent; and that this day wherein the ſaid Service is begun to be performed in it, is one of the moſt joyfull days that this Pariſh ever ſaw.

This therefore is that which I ſhall endeavour to prove at this time: And for that end I have choſen theſe words for the ground and foundation of all that I ſhall ſay upon this ſubject, *Let all things be done to Edifying.* For the right underſtanding whereof, we muſt know, that the Apoſtle having in this Chapter diſcourſed at large concerning the way and manner of holding Chriſtian Aſſemblies, and having proved that whatſoever is there ſaid ought to be ſpoken in ſuch a Language, that all there preſent may underſtand, and ſo be edi-

edified by it; he at laſt ſums up the whole in this Propoſition, *How is it then Brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a Pſalm, hath a Doctrine, hath a Tongue, hath a Revelation, hath an Interpretation. Let all things be done to Edifying*: As if he ſhould have ſaid, Whatſoever gifts any of you have or pretend to, yet when you meet together upon a Religious Account, for the Publick Worſhip of God, take ſpecial care that all things be there done to the Edifying of all who are there preſent. From whence it is plain that the Apoſtle lays down this as a general Rule, neceſſary to be obſerved in all Chriſtian Congregations. So that whenſoever we meet together to worſhip and ſerve God, if any thing be there done which is not for our Edification, we come ſhort of this Rule, & ſo we do too, if any thing be there wanting that may conduce to that end. For according to this Rule, as

nothing is to be there done but what is for our Edifing, ſo alſo on the other ſide, all things that are or can be for our Edifying ought to be there done.

But for our better underſtanding the true ſenſe and purport of this Rule, it is neceſſary to conſider what the Apoſtle here means by *edifying*? For which we muſt know, that all Chriſtians being, as the ſame Apoſtle ſaith, *of the Houſhold of* GOD *built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone*; Eph. 2. 19. 20. Hence whatſoever tends to the ſtrengthning, ſupporting, cementing, or raiſing this Fabrick higher, whatſoever it is whereby men are made more firme and ſolid Chriſtians, more holy and perfect men than they were before, by that they are ſaid to be *edified*. And therefore it is a great miſtake for men to think, as many do, that they are *edified* by what they hear, meerly

becauſe they know perhaps ſome little thing which before they were ignorant of. For *Knowledge*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *puffeth up*; it is *Charity that edifieth*, 1. Cor. 8. 1. And therefore whatſoever knowledge we attain to, we cannot be ſaid to be *edified* by it, any further than as it influenceth our minds, excites our Love, and inclines our hearts to God & goodneſs. And that this is the true notion of *edifying*, is plain from the Apoſtles own words, where he ſaith, *Let no corrupt Communication come out of your mouths, but that which is for the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers*; Eph. 4. 29. For from hence it is manifeſt, that that only is properly ſaid to *edifie*, that miniſters grace unto us, whereby we are made more pure and holy than we were before And therefore we read of *Edifying our ſelves in love*, Eph. 4.

4. 16. and *building up ourſelves in our moſt holy faith*, Jude 20. which are the two graces that make up a real and true *Chriſtian*. And nothing can be ſaid to *edifie*, but what tends to the exciting & increaſing of them *Until we come* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*; Eph. 4. 12. 13. Hence therefore when the Apoſtle ſaith, *Let all things be done to edifying*, his meaning in briefe is this, that in all our Chriſtian Aſſemblies, when we meet together to worſhip and ſerve God, All things there are to be ſo done, that we may returne home wiſer and better than we came thither, with our knowledge of God and Chriſt increaſed, our deſires enlarged, our love Inflamed, our faith confirmed, all our graces quickened, and ſo our whole

ſouls made more humble, more holy, more like to God, than they were before.

The words being thus briefly explained, I ſhall now apply them to our preſent purpoſe, and ſhew that that Form of Religious Worſhip, which is preſcribed by our Church, eſtabliſhed by the Laws of the *Land*; and therefore to be uſed now in this place, agrees exactly with this Rule or Canon of the holy Apoſtle, even that *all things in it are done to edifying.*

But before we prove that that Form in Particular, which our Church hath preſcribed, is agreeable to this Apoſtolical Rule, it is neceſſary to prove firſt, That the preſcribing a Forme in general is ſo. For unleſs the preſcribing a Form in general be according to this Rule, no Form in particular that is preſcribed can poſſibly agree with it.

But

But now that this Rule admits, yea requires the preſcribing of ſome Form, is evident from the Rule it ſelf. For the Apoſtle here commands the Church of *Corinth*, and ſo all Provincial Churches, to take care that in their Religious Aſſemblies *All things be done to edifying*. But how is it poſſible for any Provincial Church to ſee that this be done, except ſhe preſcribes ſome certain Form for the doing of it? If every Miniſter of a Pariſh ſhould be left to his own liberty to do what he pleaſed in his own Congregation, although ſome perhaps might be ſo wiſe and prudent as to obſerve this Rule, as well as they could, yet conſidering the Corruption of Humane Nature, we have much cauſe to fear that others would not. At leaſt the Church could be no way ſecured that all would; and therefore muſt needs be obliged to conſider of and appoint

ſome ſuch Form to be uſed in all her Congregations, by which ſhe may be fully aſſured that this Apoſtolical Rule is every where obſerved, as it ought to be. And although we ſhould ſuppoſe what can never be expected, that all the Clergy in every Province ſhould be as wiſe and good as they ought to be, yet it cannot be ſuppoſed that every one of them ſhould underſtand what is for the Edification of the people as well as all together. And therefore it muſt needs be acknowledged that the ſureſt way to have this Rule obſerved, is, for the Governours of every Church, and the whole Clergy, to meet together by their Repreſentatives in a Synod or Convocation, and there upon mature Deliberation agree upon ſome ſuch Form, which they in their Prudence and Conſciences judge to be according to this Rule, which the Apoſtle here lays down before them. And

And beſides, that the preſcribing a Form in general, is more for our *edifying*, than to leave every one to do what ſeems good in his own eyes, We have the concurrent Teſtimony, Experience and Practice of the Univerſal Church. For we never read or heard of any Church in the World from the Apoſtles dayes to ours, but what took this courſe. Though all have not uſed the ſame, yet no Church but has uſed ſome Form or other. And therefore for any man to ſay, That it is not lawful, or not expedient; or not ſo edifying, to uſe a Form of Prayer in the publick Worſhip of God, is to contradict the general ſenſe of Chriſtianity, to condemn the Holy Catholick Church, and to make himſelf wiſer than all Chriſtians that ever were before him. Which whatſoever it may be thought now, was always heretofore reck'ned one of the greateſt

eſt ſins and follies that a man could be guilty of.

Nay more than all this too: For this is not only to make a mans ſelf wiſer then all Chriſtians, but wiſer than Chriſt himſelf: For it is impoſſible to preſcribe any Form of Prayer in more Plain and expreſs Termes than he hath done it, where he ſaith, *When you Pray, ſay, Our Father which art in heaven*, &c. *Luke.* 11, 2.

And I hope none here preſent but will acknowledge that Chriſt, by whom alone we can be edified, knows better what is, or what is not for our edification, than we or all the Men in the World can doe. And therefore ſeeing he hath not only preſcribed a Form of Prayer for his Diſciples to uſe, but hath expreſly commanded them to uſe it, we who profeſs our ſelves to be his Diſciples, ought to reſt fully ſatiſfied in our minds, that uſing of a Form of Prayer

er, is not only lawful, but much more for our edifying, than it is poſſible for any other way of Praying to be.

The ſame may be proved alſo from the nature of the thing it ſelf, by ſuch Arguments, which do not onely demonſtrate that it is ſo, but likewiſe ſhew how it comes to be ſo. *For*, Firſt, In order to our being edified, ſo as to be made better and holier: whenſoever we meet together upon a Religious account, it is neceſſary that the ſame good and holy things be always inculcated and preſſed upon us after one and the ſame manner. For we cannot but all find by our own experience how difficult it is to faſten any thing that is truly good either upon our ſelves or others, and that it is rarely, if ever effected without frequent repetitions of it. Whatſoever good things we hear only once, or now and then: though per-

perhaps upon the hearing of them they may ſwim for a while in our Brains, yet they ſeldom ſink down into our hearts, ſo as to move and ſway the affections, as it is neceſſary they ſhould do in order to our being edified by them. Whereas by a Set Form of Publick Devotions rightly compoſed, as we are continually put in mind of all things neceſſary for us to know or do, ſo that is always done by the ſame words and expreſſions, which by their conſtant uſe will imprint the things themſelves ſo firmly in our minds, that it will be no eaſie matter to obliterat or raze them out, but doe what we can, they will ſtill occur upon all occaſions; which cannot but be very much for our Chriſtian Edification.

Moreover, that which conduceth to the quickening our ſouls, and to the raiſing up of our Affections in

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our Publick Devotions, muſt needs be acknowledged to conduce much to our Edification. But it is plain, that as to ſuch purpoſes a Set Form of Prayer is an extraordinary help to us; for if I hear another pray, and know not before-hand what he will ſay, I muſt firſt liſten to what he will ſay next, then I am to conſider whether what he ſaith be agreeable to Sound Doctrine, and whether it be proper and lawful for me to joyn with him in the Petitions he puts up to Almighty God; and if I think it is ſo, then I am to do it. But before I can well do that, he is got to another thing: By which means it is very difficult, if not morally impoſſible, to joyn with him in every thing ſo regularly as I ought to doe. But by a Set Form of Prayer all this trouble is prevented; for having the Form continually in my mind, being thorowly acquainted with it,

fully approving of every thing in it, and always knowing before-hand what will come next, I having nothing elſe to do while the words are ſounding in mine ears, but to move my heart and affections ſuitably to them, to raiſe up my deſires of thoſe good things which are prayed for; to fix my mind wholly upon God, whilſt I am praiſing of him, and ſo to employ, quicken, and lift up my whole ſoul in performing my Devotions to him. No man that hath been accuſtomed to a ſet Form for any conſiderable time, but may eaſily find this to be true by his own experience: And by conſequence, that this way of Praying is a greater help to us, than they can imagine that never made tryall of it.

To this may be alſo added, That if we hear another Praying a Prayer of his own private Compoſition or voluntary Effuſion, our minds are wholly

wholy bound up and confined to his words and expreſſions, and to his Requeſts and Petitions, be they what they will: So that at the beſt we can but Pray his Prayer. Whereas when we pray by a Form Preſcribed by the Church, we Pray the Prayers of the whole Church we live in, which are common to the Miniſter and People, to our Selves, and to all the Members of the ſame Church: So that we have all the Devout and Pious Souls that are in it, concurring and joyning with us in them: which cannot ſurely but be more effectual for the Edifying not only of our ſelves in particular, but of the Church in general than any private Prayer can be.

Laſtly, In order to our being Edified by our Publick Devotions, as it is neceſſary that we know before hand what we are to Pray for, ſo it is neceſſary that we afterwards know

know what we have Prayed for, when we have done. For I ſuppoſe you will all grant, that all the good and benefit we can receive from our Prayers, is to be ultimatly reſolved into Gods gracious hearing and anſwering of them: Without which they will all come to nothing. But there are two things required to the obtaining an Anſwer of our Prayers: Firſt, That we ſincerely and earneſtly deſire ſuch good things at the hands of God, to which, as I have ſhewen, a Set Form of Prayer conduceth very much. And then Secondly, It is required alſo that we truſt and depend upon God for his granting of them, according to the Promiſes which he hath made unto us in Jeſus *Chriſt* our Lord. And I verily belive that one great *Reaſon* why Men Pray ſo often to no purpoſe, is, becauſe they do not take this courſe: But when they have done

done theirs Prayers, they have done with them, and concern themſelves no more about them then, as if they had never Prayed at all. But how can we expect that God ſhould anſwer our Prayers, when we our ſelves do not mind whether he anſwer them or no? Nor belive and truſt upon him for it? For certainly truſting on God, as it is one of the higheſt Acts of Religion that we can performe, ſo it is that which gives life and vigor, vertue and efficacy to our prayers; without which we have no ground at all to expect they ſhould be anſwered. For God having promiſed to anſwer our Prayers, except we truſt on him for his performance of ſuch Promiſes, we loſe the benefit of them, and by conſequence our Prayers too. And therefore as ever we deſire that he ſhould grant us what we pray for, when we have directed our prayers

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to him, we muſt ſtill look up, *Pſal.* 5. 3. expecting and hopeing for the returne of them.

Now as this is a thing of greater conſequence, ſo a Set Form of Prayer is a greater help to us in it, than it is commonly thought to be. For if we hear another utter a prayer *ex tempore*, which he never ſaid, nor we heard before, nor ever ſhall do it again, it is much if he himſelf can remember the tenth part of what he ſaid, how much leſs can we that heard him do it? And if we cannot poſſibly remember what we prayed for, how is it poſſible for us to expect it at the hands of God? Or to depend upon him for it? But now it is quite otherwiſe when we uſe a Set *Form* of prayer. *For* by this means when we have prayed, we we can recollect our ſelves, look over our Prayers again, either in a Book, or in our Minds, where they

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are imprinted; we can conſider diſtinctly what we have asked at the hands of God, and ſo act our faith and confidence on him, for the granting every Petition we have put up unto him, according to the promiſes which he hath made us to that purpoſe. And as this is the ſureſt way whereby to obtain what we pray for, it muſt needs be the moſt edifying way of Praying that we can poſſibly uſe.

Theſe things being duly weighed, I ſhall now take it for granted, That the uſing a Form in general in the Publick Worſhip of God, is agreeable to this Apoſtolical Rule, *Let all things be done to edifying*; and ſo ſhall proceed to ſhew that that Form in particular which our Church hath appointed to be uſed upon ſuch occaſions, is ſo too. For which end it is not neceſſary that I ſhould run through every Particular word, phraſe

phraſe, or expreſſion in the *Common Prayer*, much leſs that I ſhould vindicate and defend it from every little exception, that ignorance or malice may make againſt ſomething in it. For nothing ever yet was or can be ſaid or written, but ſomething or other may be ſaid or written againſt it, either well or ill. But my buſineſs muſt be to prove, That the Form of Divine Service, contained in the Book of *Common Prayer*, which is now uſed in the Church of *England*, conduceth ſo much to the edifying thoſe that uſe it, that it agrees exactly with the Rule which the Apoſtle here preſcribs in that caſe. And this I ſhal demonſtrat from four Heads. 1 *From the language.* 2 *From the mater or ſubſtance of it.* 3 *From the Method.* 4. *From the Manner of Performing it.* For if it be edifying in all theſe reſpects, it muſt needs be acknowledged to be ſo in the whole. There be-

being nothing in it, but what may be reduced to theſe Heads.

Firſt, Therefore as to the Language, you all know that the whole Service is performed in Engliſh, the Vulgar and Common Language of the Nation, which every one underſtands, and ſo may be edified by it. And this indeed is the ground and foundation of all the benefit that we can poſſibly receive from our Publick Prayers. And therefore in the Church of *Rome*, the Common People are made uncapable of being edified by the prayers of their Church in that they are all made in Latine, a Language which they do not underſtand. So that when they meet to worſhip God, there are ſeldom any in the Congregation that knows what is ſaid there, except the Prieſt that reads it; and oftentimes not he neither. By which means they have no ſuch thing really amongſt

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Firſt, Therefore as to the Language, you all know that the whole Service is performed in Engliſh, the Vulgar and Common Language of the Nation, which every one underſtands, and ſo may be edified by it. And this indeed is the ground and foundation of all the benefit that we can poſſibly receive from our Publick Prayers. And therefore in the Church of *Rome*, the Common People are made uncapable of being edified by the prayers of their Church in that they are all made in Latine, a Language which they do not underſtand. So that when they meet to worſhip God, there are ſeldom any in the Congregation that knows what is ſaid there, except the Prieſt that reads it; and oftentimes not he neither. By which means they have no ſuch thing really amongſt

them as *Common Prayer*. Neither is it poſſible for the Common People to be ever edified by what is there ſaid or done, except they would be once convinced by it of the horrible abuſe which their Church puts upon them, in comanding all her Publick Devotions to be performed in an unknown Tongue, directly contrary not only to the *Rule* in my *Text*, but to the *Deſigne* of this whole *Chapter*.

But bleſſed be God for it, it is not ſo with us. For ours is truly *Common Prayer*, for it is written and read in that *Language* which is common to all the *Congregations* in the *Kingdom*, and to every perſon in each *Congregation*. So that all the People of the *Land*, whatſoever *rank* or *condition* they are of, may joyn together in the uſe of every thing that is in it; and ſo be joyntly *Edifyed* by it. Eſpecially conſidering that

that it is not only all in *English*, but in common and plain *English*, such as we use in our *common discourse* with one another. There are no unusual or obsolete words, or hard or uncouth Phrases in it, but every thing is expressed as clearly and plainly as words can do it: so that the *meanest person* in the *Congregation*, that understands but his *Mother's Tongue*, may be *Edified* by it, as well as the *greatest Scholar*.

But that which is chiefly to be considered in the *Language* of the *Common Prayer* is, that it is not only *common*, but *Proper* too. Though the *words* there used are but *common words*, Yet they are so used, that they properly express the things that are designed by them. This I confess may seem to be no great matter at first sight. Yet it is that without which we might be subverted by that which was intended for our *Edi-*

diſication. For *Impropriety* of *Speech* in *Matters* of *Religion*, hath given occaſion to all or moſt of the *Schiſms*, *Errors*, and *Hereſies*, that ever infeſted this or any other *Church*; as might eaſily be demonſtrated. Hence the Apoſtle gave *Timothy* a *Form of ſound words*, and charged him to hold it faſt. *Hold faſt*, ſaith he, *the Form of ſound words which thou haſt heard of me*; 2. Tim. 2. 13. As knowing that except the words whereby he uſually expreſſed *Divine Truths*, were ſound and proper, it would be impoſſible for his *Notions* and *Opinions* of the *Things* themſelves to be ſo. And certainly if ever there was a *Form* of *Sound Words* compoſed by *men* ſince the *Apoſtles* times, our *Common Prayer* may juſtly deſerve that *Title*. It being all made up of ſuch fit and proper, ſuch ſound and wholeſome words, that if we do but hold faſt to them, there

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is no fear of our falling either into *Hereſy* or *Schiſme*. For they, being duly conſidered, will ſuggeſt to our minds *right* and *true Apprehenſions* of all the *Articles* of our *Chriſtian Religion*, and ſo not only make us ſound, but build us up ſtrong and firm in our moſt *Holy Faith*. So that conſidering the plainneſs and perſpicuity, the ſoundneſs and propriety of *Speech* which is uſed in it, the leaſt that can be ſaid of the *Common Prayer*, is that all things in it are ſo worded, as is moſt for the *edifying* of all thoſe that uſe it.

And as the words in the *Common Prayer* are all as *edifying* as *words* can be, ſo, in the ſecond place, Is the *Matter* expreſſed by thoſe *words*. For there is nothing in it, but what is neceſſary for our *Edification*, and all things that are or can be for our *Edification* are plainly in it. Firſt, I ſay there is nothing in our *Liturgy* but

but what is neceſſary for our *Edification*. There are no ſuch *Fables* in it, or *endleſs Genealogies*, which, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Miniſter queſtions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith*; 1. Tim. 1. 4. There are none of thoſe *vain Diſputations* and and *impertinent Controverſies*, which have of late been raiſed in the *Church*, to it's great diſturbance, rather than its *Edification*. There are no *New Opinions*, nor *Airy Speculations* in it, which ſerve only to tickle mens ears and pleaſe their fancies, and ſo divert their thoughts from what they are about. Look it all over without *prejudice* and *partiality*, conſider ſeriouſly every thing that is in it, and you will find nothing aſſerted but what is conſonant to *Gods Word*, nothing prayed for but according to his *Promiſes*, nothing required as a duty, but what is agreeable to his *Commands*; nothing

ſaid

ſaid or done, but what is grave and ſober, ſolemn and ſubſtantial; nothing but what becomes the *Worſhip* of our *Great* and *Almighty Creator*. And therefore nothing but what we may be ſome way or other edified by it.

And as there is nothing in it, but what is edifying, ſo all things that are or can be edifying are in it. For nothing can be neceſſary to edify and make us ſolid & perfect Chriſtians, but what is neceſſary either to be *believed* or *done*, or elſe obtained by us. But there is nothing neceſſary to be known or *believed*, but we are taught it; nothing neceſſary to be *done*, but we are enjoyned it; nothing neceſſary to be *obtained*, but we pray for it, in our Publick Form of Divine Service.

For Firſt, As to thoſe things which are neceſſary to be *known* or *believed*, it is acknowledged by all Proteſtants, that

that they are fully contained in the Holy Scriptures, which make a great, if not the greateſt part of our Divine Service, and are conſtantly read over, the Pſalms once every Month, the Old Teſtament once, and the New thrice every Year. And all the Fundamental Articles of our Chriſtian Faith, revealed in the Holy Scriptures, being briefly ſummed up in the *Apoſtles Creed*: that we may be ſure to keep them always in our minds, we have that Creed read and repeated, always once and moſt commonly twice every day in the Year. And ſeeing the Godhead of our Bleſſed Saviour, the Foundation of our whole Religion, hath been and ſtill is denied by ſome, leſt we ſhould be led away with the Error of the Wicked, every Sunday and Holy day we read the *Nicene Creed*, wherein the God-head both of the Son and Holy Ghoſt is aſſert-

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ed and explained. And that we may not entertain Erroneous Opinions concerning the moſt Holy Trinity, or the Incarnation of the Son of God, but keep the true Catholick Faith whole and undefiled, upon certain days every Year, we read that which is commonly called the *Creed of S. Athanaſius*, wherein thoſe great Myſteries are unfolded in the moſt proper and perſpicuous terms that they are capable of.

And as all things neceſſary to be believed are ſummarily contained in the Three Creeds, ſo they are frequently explain'd in the other parts of our Liturgy: In ſo much that it would be eaſie to frame a compleat Body of Divinity out of the words there uſed: At leaſt of all ſuch things as are needfull for any Man in the World to believe or know, in order to his Eternal Salvation.

The ſame may be ſaid alſo of all

thoſe things, which we ought to do. For as we here do whatſoever is neceſſary to be done in order to our Worſhipping of God in this place, ſo we are here taught whatſoever is neceſſary to be learnt in order to our ſerving God in all other places. So that no Man that frequents our publick Congregations, where the *Common Prayer* is uſed, can ever plead ignorance of any one duty whatſoever. For if it be not his own fault, he may there be inſtructed in every thing which he that made him requires of him. For here, as I obſerved before, we conſtantly read the *Holy Scriptures*, which, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly inſtructed unto all good works*; 2. Tim. 3. 16. 17. And ſeeing it hath pleaſed the moſt high GOD

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to compriſe his whole *will*, and by conſequence our *duty*, in the *Ten Commandments*, hence we read them conſtantly every *Sunday* and *Holy day* throughout the whole *Year*. By which means every one that doth not willfully ſhut his eyes, may clearly ſee and fully underſtand his *whole duty* both to *God* and *Man*. Eſpecially conſidering that in the *Prayers* themſelves alſo there is frequent mention made of all thoſe *Vices* which ought to be avoided, and of all thoſe *Good Works* which ought to be performed by *us*. So that we can never come to *Church*, but we are ſtill put in mind, both of *what we ought*, & *what we ought not* to do, that we may *be ſaved*.

And then as there is nothing neceſſary to be known or done, but we are taught it; ſo neither is there any thing neceſſary to be obtained to make us either *Holy* or

happy

happy, but we pray for it in the *Common Prayer*. For here we have the *Lords Prayer*, a *Prayer* compoſed by *Wiſdom* it ſelf; and therefore it muſt needs be the moſt *perfect* and *Divine Prayer* that was ever made. Neither do we uſe it only once, but in every *diſtinct Service* of the *Church*, in our *Prayers* before we read the *Holy Scriptures*: And in our *Prayers* after: Towards the end of the *Litany*, and in the beginning of the *Communion Service*, and in every *Office* of the *Church*, beſides. And the reaſon is, becauſe although our *Saviour* hath not forbidden us to uſe any other *Prayers*, yet he hath expreſſly commanded us to ſay this, whenſoever we pray. And therefore in obedience to his *Command*, our *Church* hath wiſely ordered, That in all and every *Solemn Addreſs* that we make to the moſt high *God*, we always ſay this *Prayer*, leaſt

leaſt otherwiſe by our tranſgreſſion of his *Command*, in omitting this, we make all our other *Prayers* to be ineffectual. And beſides, by the conſtant uſe of this amongſt our other *Prayers*, we are alwiſe ſure to uſe one *Prayer*, both abſolutly perfect in its ſelf, and moſt acceptable unto him, to whom we pray, it being a *Prayer* of his own *Compoſure*: So that we ſpeak unto *God*, in his own words, and ſo may be confident that we ask nothing of him but exactly according to his *own will*.

And though all things neceſſary for us, be vertually contain'd in the *Lords Prayer*, yet our *Church* in *Conformity* to the *Catholick* and *Apoſtolical*, hath thought good to add ſome other *Prayers* in which the ſame things are more particularly expreſſed and deſired at the hands of our great and moſt *Bountiful Benefactor*. All which are ſo contrived, that there

there is nothing evill or hurtfull for us, but we pray againſt it; nothing good or uſefull, but we pray for it. There is no *Vice* or *Luſt*, but we deſire it may be ſubdued under us; no *Grace* or *Vertue*, but we pray it may be planted and grow in us. In ſo much that if we do but conſtantly and ſincerely pray over all thoſe *Prayers*, and ſtedfaſtly believe and truſt in *God* for his anſwering of them, and ſo obtain what we there pray for, we cannot but be as real and true *Saints*; as happy and bleſſed *Creatures*, as it is poſſible for us to be in this *World*. Neither do we here *Pray* for our ſelves only, but according to the Apoſtles Advice, we make *Supplications Prayers*, *Interceſſions*, and *giving of thanks for all Men*; yea *for our verie Enemies*, as our Saviour hath commanded us, *Mat.* 5. 44. And what can be deſired more than all this, to make

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the *Matter* of the *Common Prayer Edifying* either to our ſelves or others? Nothing certainly but truth and ſincerity of heart in the uſing of it.

I cannot paſs from this Head, before I have obſerved one thing more unto you, concerning the *Prayers* in general, and that is, That they are not carried on in one continued Diſcourſe, but divided into many ſhort *Prayers* or *Collects*, ſuch as that is which our *Lord* himſelf Compoſed; and that might be one Reaſon, wherefore our *Church* to ordered it, that ſo ſhe might follow our *Lords Example* in it, who beſt knew what kind of *Prayers* were fitteſt for us to uſe. And indeed we cannot but all find by our own *experience*, how difficult it is to keep our *minds* long intent upon any thing, much more upon ſo great things as the *object* and *ſubjects* of our *Prayers* are; but do what we can,

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we are ſtill liable to diſtractions: So that there is a kind of neceſſity to break off ſometimes, to give our ſelves a breathing time, that our thoughts being looſned for a while, they may with more eaſe, and leſs danger of diſtraction, be tyed up again, as it is neceſſary they ſhould be all the while that we are actualy *Praying* to the *Supream Being* of the *World*.

Beſides that, in order to the performing our *Devotions* aright to the moſt high *God*, it is neceſſary that our *Souls* be poſſeſſed all along with due apprehenſions of his *greatneſs* and *glory*. To which purpoſe our ſhort *Prayers* contribute very much, for every one of them beginning with ſome of the properties or perfections of *God*, and ſo ſuggeſting to our minds right Apprehenſions of him at firſt, it is eaſy to preſerve them in our Minds during the ſpace of a ſhort *Prayer*, which in a long one would

would be apt to ſcatter and vaniſh away.

But that which I look upon as one of the principal Reaſons, why our *Publick Devotions* are and ſhould be divided into ſhort *Collects*, is this, Our *Bleſſed Saviour*, we know, hath often told us, That whatſoever we ask in his *Name*, we ſhall receive: And ſo hath directed us in all our *Prayers* to make uſe of his *Name*, and to ask nothing but upon the account of his *Merit* and *Mediation* for us: upon which all our hopes and expectations from *God* do wholly and ſolely depend. Hence therefore (as it always was ſo) it cannot but be judged neceſſary, that the *Name* of *Chriſt* be frequently inſerted in our *Prayers*, that ſo we may lift up our hearts unto him, & act our *Faith* upon him for our obtaining the good things we pray for. And ſo we ſee it is in the *Common*

Prayer: for whatſoever it is we aſk of God, we preſently add *Through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, or ſomething to that Purpoſe. And to aſk nothing but according to our *Lords direction* even in his *Name*. And this is the reaſon that makes our *Prayers* ſo ſhort; for take away the concluſion of every *Collect* or *Prayer*, in the *Name of Chriſt*, and You may joyn them all together, and make them but as one continued *Prayer*. But this would be to offer manifeſt violence to the *Prayers*, by taking away that which gives them all their force and energy, and ſo making them ineffectual to the purpoſes for which they are uſed. For certainly the asking all things in the *Name* of *Chriſt*, as we do in the *Common Prayer*, is the only way whereby to obtain what we deſire, and by conſequence the moſt *edifying way* of *Praying* in the *world*.

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The next thing to be considered in the *Common Prayer*, is the *Method*, which is admirable, and as Edifying, if possible, as the matter it self. This none can deny that doth but fully understand, and seriously consider of it. Which therefore that you may all do, I shall briefly run through the whole, and give you what Light I can into it, that you may clearly see not only the *reasonableness* but the *excellency* of it all along. For which purpose I shall instance only in such things which offer themselves at first sight, to any one that doth but cast his eye upon it.

Let us therefore suppose a Congregation of sober and devout Christians, such as we all should be, met together to perform their *Publick Devotions* to Almighty God; every one of which hath lift up his heart privatly unto him already, imploring

ploring his Aid and Aſſiſtance in the performance of ſo great a work, and ſo are all now ready to ſet about it. The firſt thing we do, is to read ſome *Sentences* of Holy Scripture, that ſo we may begin our *Devotions* unto *God* in his own words. And they are all ſuch *Sentences* as put us in mind of our ſins againſt him, and of his promiſe to Pardon them if we do repent: That ſo we may preſent and carry our ſelves with that *Reverence* and *Godly Fear* before him, as becometh thoſe who are ſenſible of their own vileneſs and unworthineſs to approach ſo great a Majeſty; and likewiſe with that Faith and humble *Confidence*, which becometh thoſe who believe that he upon our *Repentance* will pardon our ſins, and accept both our *Perſons* and *Performances* according to the promiſes which he hath made unto us.

Then follows a grave *Exhortation*, con-

concerning the end of our preſent Aſſembling, which is of great uſe, and ought never to be omitted. For Men generally are apt to ruſh into the preſence of God, without ever conſid'ring what they go about: whereas this *Exhortation* puts us upon conſidering the greatneſs of the Work which we are now engaged in, and ſo upon compoſing our thoughts and preparing our ſelves for the due perfo mance of it.

Our minds being thus brought into a right frame and temper for it, we all, both *Miniſter* and *People*, proſtrate our ſelves before the moſt high God, *confeſſing* upon our knees the manifold ſins and wickedneſs that we have committed againſt him. Which *Confeſſion* is ſo contrived, that all and every perſon in any *Congregation* whatſoever may joyn in it. For it runs in general terms. And yet ſo too, that every particular

lar perſon may and ought in his own mind to confeſs and acknowledge his own ſins, which he knows himſelf to be guilty of. As where we ſay, *We have left undone thoſe things which we ought to have done, and we have done thoſe things which we ought not to have done.* At the ſaying of this, every one ſhould call his own ſins to remembrance, what Duties he knows himſelf to have omitted, and what Vices he knows himſelf to have committed, and confeſs them accordingly unto God. And when we have thus confeſſed our ſins to God, we preſently implore his Mercy in the pardon of them, and his Grace, that for the future we may forſake them.

And whilſt we are thus upon our knees, humbly confeſſing and bewailing our ſins before the Lord our God, the Miniſter ſtands up and in the *Name* of *God*, declares and pronounceth

nounceth to all thoſe who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his Goſpel; *The Abſolution and Remiſſion of all their ſins.* Which though ſpoken alſo in general terms, yet every particular perſon there preſent ought to apply it to himſelf, ſo as to be fully perſwaded in his own mind that if he doth but ſincerely repent, and believe the Goſpel, he is perfectly abſolved from all his ſins by God himſelf, according to the promiſes which he hath made to Mankind in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

And now looking upon our ſelves as abſolved from our ſins, upon our Repentance and Faith in Chriſt, and by conſequence as Reconciled to God, we take the boldneſs to call him Father, humbly addreſſing our ſelves to him in that Divine Form of Prayer which he himſelf hath given us. Which done, we lift up our hearts and Voices unto God,

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for his aſſiſtance of us in what we do, in the words of *David*, the Miniſter crying out, *O Lord, open thou our lips!* and the People anſwering, *And our mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy praiſe.* The Miniſter again, *O God make ſpeed to ſave us*, the People, *O Lord make haſt to help us.* And then immediately we all lift up our bodies too, ſtand upon our feet, and ſo put our ſelves into a poſture of praiſing and magnifying the Eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, for his infinit goodneſs and mercy towards us; for which purpoſe the Miniſter firſt ſaith or ſings the *Gloria Patri*, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt*, and the people, to ſhew their conſent, anſwer, *As it was in the beginning, is now; and ever ſhall be world without end*, Amen. But not thinking this to be enough, the Miniſter calls upon the people again,

again, saying, *Praise ye the Lord*, and the people answer, *The Lord's name be praised*; and then we go on to praise him together, saying or singing the XCV Psalm. *Venite exultemus Domino, O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our Salvation*, &c. And so proceed to the Psalms appointed for the day. After every one of which; to testifie our belief in the most sacred Trinity, and our acknowledgement of that infinite love and goodness, which every one of those Divine Persons hath manifested to us, we repeat that incomparable Hymn, *Glory be to the Father*, &c.

Our hearts being thus raised up to *God* in praising and admiring of him, we are now in a fit temper and disposition to hear what he shall speak unto us. And therefore have a Chapter read out of the *Old*

Teſtament; and that in its ordinary courſe, except upon Sundays and Holy days, when more people attending the *Publick Worſhip* of God then can conveniently come upon other days, we read ſome Select Chapter proper for the day, and ſuch as is judged moſt edifying to all that are there preſent. And having thus heard God ſpeaking unto us in his holy Word, we preſently fall upon praiſing of him again, for ſo unſpeakable a mercy, ſaying, or ſinging, in the Morning, the *Te Deum*, one of the moſt Heavenly and Seraphick Hymns that was ever compoſed by Men; or elſe the *Song of the three Children*, which is nothing but a Paraphraſe upon that which *David* ſang ſo often upon Earth, and which the Holy Angels ſing continually in heaven; even *Hallelujah*, *Praiſe ye the Lord*. Wherein we being all ſenſible how far ſhort we our ſelves come of

of praiſing God ſufficiently, we call upon all Creatures in the World to do it, *Bleſs ye the Lord, praiſe him and magnifie him for ever.* In the Afternoon we ſing either the *Magnificat*, or elſe the 98 *Pſalm*, both which being taken out of Gods own Word, cannot but be very pleaſing and acceptable unto him.

After this our Souls being got upon the wing again, and ſoaring aloft in the contemplation of the Divine perfections, we are now rightly qualified to hear and receive the Sublime Myſteries of the Goſpel. And therefore have a Chapter read to us out of the *New Teſtament*. After which we being revived with the good Tidings of the Goſpel, and filled with admiration at the Infinite goodneſs of God therein reveaſed to us, we break forth again into praiſing and adoring of him, in the ſong of *Zacharias*, or elſe the

100 *Pſalm* in the Morning, and at Evening, either the 67 *Pſalm*, or elſe the Song of old *Simeon*, ſtill concluding with the *Gloria Patri*.

Now having thus heard ſome part of the *Word* of God read to us and expreſſed our thankfulneſs unto him for it, to ſignifie our aſſent, not only to what we have heard, but to the whole Scripture, we all with one heart and voice repeat the *Apoſtles Creed*, wherein the ſumm and ſubſtance of it is contained. And ſo profeſs our ſelves to continue in the number of Chriſts Diſciples, and that as we were at firſt Baptized, ſo we ſtill believe in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, God *Bleſſed* for evermore.

Hitherto we have been moſtly taken up with confeſſing our ſins to God, imploring his mercy in the pardon of them, hearing his moſt holy Word, *acknowledging* his goodneſs

neſs to us, and praiſing and magnifying his name for it. By which, means, except we have been extremly wanting to our ſelves, our hearts cannot but be ſo united and fixed upon God, that we are now rightly diſpoſed to make known our wants and preſent our *Petitions* before him. This therefore is the next thing we ſet upon. But ſeeing that neither *Miniſter* nor *People* can poſſibly do it aright without the aſſiſtance of God himſelf, therefore each of them firſt pray for his ſpecial preſence with the other. The one ſaying, *The Lord be with you*, the other, *And with thy ſpirit.* And then immediatly falling down upon our knees, we adore and ſupplicate each *perſon* of the moſt bleſſed *Trinity* to have mercy upon us, *Lord have mercy upon us, Chriſt have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.*

After which we addreſs our ſelves to God

God in the *Words* that he hath put into our mouths, ſaying the Lords Prayer, which ended, the Miniſter and People by turns lift up their hearts to God in ſome ſhort and heavenly *Ejaculations*, ſtriving as it were to outvy each other in prevailing with the Allmighty to pour down his *Bleſſings* upon us. And then in an humble and ſolemn manner we joyn together in ſupplicating his Divine Majeſty for his Grace and Favour, his Defence and Protection, his Mercy and Bleſſing for our ſelves, for the King, for the Royal Family, for his *Church*, and for all Mankind. And this we do ordinarily in the Collects appointed for that Purpoſe. But upon Wedneſdays and Fridays (upon which days the *Primitive* Church uſed to performe more than their ordinary Devotions) as alſo upon the *Lords day* in the Morning, we do it in the

Litany

Litany, and in ſuch a *Litany* as comprehends all and every thing that we can ever need to *deſire* of Almighty *God*, either for our ſelves or others.

After this upon Sundays and *Holy days* we proceed to the *Communion-Service*: And therefore approaching to the *Lords Table*, we begin it with his own *Prayer*. And after another ſhort *Prayer* to *God* to cleanſe the *thoughts* of our heart by the Inſpiration of his Holy Spirit, we read the *Ten Commandments* which he hath enjoyned us to obſerve; and after every *Commandment* we ask God Mercy for our Tranſgreſſions thereof for the time paſt, and grace to keep the ſame for the time to come; ſaying, *Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this Law.* And then after a Prayer for the King, and the Collect for the day, we read the *Epiſtle*

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and *Gospel*, that is, most commonly a short Paragraph taken out of the Canonical Epistles, and another out of one of the Holy Gospels, which was the *ancient* way of *Reading* the Scripture, before it was divided into Chapters. And we do it now to prepare us the better for the *Communion* of the Body and Blood of *Christ*, therein revealed to us. But seing we neither do nor can read over the whole, we repeat the substance of it in the *Nicene Creed*, which it is very necessary we should do at this time, that so we may demonstrate our selves to be Christians, and so capable of receiving the most holy *Communion*.

He that all this while hath employed himself as he ought to do in the service of our *Church*, cannot but find himself strangly edifyed by it. Yet however, that nothing may be wanting that may any way conduce

duce to our Edification, after the *Nicene Creed*, our Church hath appointed a *Sermon* to be preached which if ſound, plain, and Practical, as it ought to be, cannot but be very edifying too.

And now we may be well ſuppoſed to be ſo far edified, as to be raiſed up to the higheſt pitch of *Devotion* that we can arrive at in this world, and ſo are fit to be admitted to the higheſt *Ordinance* of the *Church*, the Sacrament of the *Lords Supper*. And therefore we now betake our ſelves to it. But that we may not appear before our Lord empty, we firſt offer up *ſomething* to him of what he hath beſtowed upon us, to be diſpoſed of to pious and charitable uſes; teſtifying thereby our acknowledgment of his *goodneſs* to us, and that we have nothing but what we receive from him. And to excite and encourage us to do this, all the while

that we are offering we have ſome ſelect *Sentences* of *Scripture* read to us, wherein God either commands us to be charitable, or elſe promiſeth a bleſſing to thoſe that are ſo. And then we pray *for Chriſts whole Church Militant here on Earth*, whereby we profeſs our ſelves to be real Members of it, and deſirous to hold *Communion* with it in Chriſts Myſtical Body and Blood. And ſo we proceed to the Celebration of it: in which the method is ſo clear, ſo apparently *edifying*, that I need not ſay any thing of it. But ſhall only obſerve two things in general concerning it.

Firſt, That the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, being the higheſt Myſtery in all our Religion, as repreſenting the death of the Son of God to us, hence that place where this *Sacrament* is *Adminiſtred*, was always made and reputed the higheſt place in

in the Church. And therefore all it was wont to be ſeparated from the reſt of the Church by a Skreen or Partition of *Net work*, in *Latine Cancelli*, and that ſo generally that from thence the place its ſelf is called the *Chancell*. That this was anciently obſerved in the building of all conſiderable *Churches* (for I ſpeak not of private *Oratories* or *Chappels*) within few Centuries after the Apoſtles themſelves, even in the days of *Conſtantine* the Great, as well as in all Ages ſince, I could eaſily demonſtrate from the *Records* of thoſe times. But having purpoſly waved *Antiquity* hitherto, I am loath to trouble you with it now. But I mention it at preſent, only becauſe ſome perhaps may *wonder* why this ſhould be *obſerved in our Church* rather than in all the other *Churches* which have been lately built in this City. Whereas they ſhould rather wonder, why

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it was not obſerved in all other as well as this. For beſides our *Obligations* to conforme as much as may be to the practice of the *Univerſal church*, and to avoid novelty and ſingularity in all things *relating* to the *Worſhip* of God; it cannot be eaſily imagined that the *Catholick Church* in all *Ages* and places for 13 or 1400 *years* together, ſhould obſerve ſuch a *cuſtome* as this, except there were great reaſons for it.

What they were, it is not neceſſary for us to *enquire* now. It may be *ſufficient* to obſerve at preſent that the *Chancel* in our *Chriſtian Churches*, was always look'd upon as anſwering to the *Holy of Holys* in the Temple, which, you know, was ſeparated from the *Sanctuary* or Body of the *Temple*, by the *command* of *God* himſelf. And that this place being *appropriated* to the *Sacrament* of the *Lords Supper*, it ought to be ſo contrived

trived, as may be moſt convenient for thoſe who are to partake of that *Bleſſed Ordinance*. But it muſt needs be more convenient for thoſe who are to enjoy *Communion* with *Chriſt*, and in him with one another, in this holy *Sacrament*, to meet together, as one body, in one place ſeparated for that purpoſe, than to be diſperſed, as otherwiſe they would be; ſome in one and ſome in another part of the *Church*. Or in ſhort, it is much better for the place to be ſeparate, than the people.

Furthermore, It is not only *convenient*, but in ſome Senſe neceſſary, for every *Communicant* to obſerve & take ſpecial notice of the ſeveral Circumſtances which our *Lord* hath ordained to be uſed in this *Sacrament*, as the Breaking of the *Bread*, and the Conſecrating both that and the *Wine*, to repreſent his *Death*, the breaking of his *Body*, and the ſhedding

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ing of his *Blood* for our ſins; that ſo our *Hearts* may be the more affected with it, & by conſequence, our Souls more edified by it. But this cannot be ſo well *done*, except there be a place ſet apart for it, where they may all be placed, about or near to the *Communion Table*, and ſo behold what is there done at the *Conſecration* of the *Elements*. Hence alſo it is, that the Seats there are and ought to be ſo ordered, that all that are in them may ſtill look that way, and contemplate upon their *Bleſſed Saviour*, there evidently ſet forth as *crucified* for them.

The other thing that I would obſerve unto you concerning the *Holy Communion*, is this, that our *Church* requireth, or at leaſt ſuppoſeth it to be *Adminiſtred* every *Lords-day*, and every *Holy-day* through out the Year, as it was in the *Primitive Church*. For that is the reaſon that the *Communion Service* is appointed

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to be uſed upon all ſuch days, and to be read at the *Communion Table*, that ſo the *Miniſter* may be there ready to *Adminiſter* it unto all that deſire to partake of it. Which ſhews the great care that our Church hath of all her *Members*, that they might be *edified* and confirmed in the Faith. To which nothing *contributes* more than frequent *Communion* at our *Lords Table*. Which if people could once be perſwaded to, they would ſoon find greater benefite by it, than I can expreſs, or they themſelves, till then, imagine. I ſhall ſay no more of it at *preſent*, but only this, That I am ſo ſenſible of what I now ſay, that could I be ſure to have a *ſufficient* number of *Communicants*, I ſhould be heartily glad to *Adminiſter* this *Holy Sacrament* every *Lords day*, both for their ſakes, and my own too.

Thus I have given you a ſhort Schem of

of that excellent *Method* wherein our *Divine Service* is performed: Which whoſoever rightly conſiders, will need no other Argument to *convince* him, that it is according to the *Apoſtles Rule*, very *Edifying* indeed. The laſt thing to be conſidered in it, is the *Manner of its Performance*; by which I mean only the ſeveral poſtures of the *Body*, as *ſtanding*, and *kneeling* which are uſed in it; for they alſo are done to *edifying*.

While we ſay or ſing the *Hymns* and *Pſalms* to the *Praiſe* and *Glory* of *God*, we *ſtand up*, not only to ſignifie, but to excite the *Elevation* of our minds at that time. For as on the one hand, if our *Souls* be really lift up in the praiſes of *God*, our *Bodies* will naturally lift up themſelves, to accompany them, as far as they can towards Heaven; ſo on the other hand, the raiſing up of our *Bodies* helps towards the raiſing up of our *Souls*

Souls too, by putting us in mind of that high and heavenly work we are now about; wherein according to our weak *Capacities*, we joyn with the *Quire* of *Heaven* in praiſing God now, as we hope to do it for evermore. For this cauſe alſo we ſtand at the *Creeds*, for they being *Confeſſions* of our Faith in God, as ſuch, they come under the proper *Notions* of *Hymns* or *Songs* of *Praiſe* to him. All our praiſing *God being* really nothing elſe but our *Confeſſing* and *acknowledging* him to be what he is in himſelf and to us. And beſides that, by our ſtanding both at the *Creeds* and *Goſpels*, we ſignifie our aſſent unto them, and our readineſs to defend them, to the outmoſt of our power againſt all *oppoſition* whatſoever. And as for the *Goſpels* particularly, they contain the very *Acts* which our *Lord* did, and the very Words which he ſpake

when he was upon *Earth*; and therefore we who profeſs him to be our *Lord* and *Maſter*, cannot ſurely but ſtand up, when we hear him ſpeaking, and liſten diligently to thoſe gracious words which proceeded out of his *Divine Mouth*.

And as when we praiſe God, we raiſe up our ſelves as high as we can towards *Heaven*, ſo when we pray unto him, we fall down as low as we can towards the *Earth*, not daring to preſent our *Supplications* to the abſolute *Monarch* of the whole *World*, any other ways then *upon our knees*. Which is ſo proper, ſo natural a poſture of *Supplicants*, that if all men would but duly conſider what they do when they pray to Almighty God, the *Church* need never have commanded them to kneel at that time. For they could not chuſe but do it: No, not although the place where they are ſhould ſeem never

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ſo inconvenient for it. For we find our *Bleſſed Saviour* himſelf kneeling at his Prayer in the Garden, upon the bare ground, *Luke* 22. 41. and St *Paul* upon the Sea-ſhore, where he could have no other *Cuſhion* but *Stones* or *Sand*; Acts 21. 5. Howſoever, To take off all thoſe litle excuſes that men are apt to make for themſelves in this caſe, the Seats in this Church are ſo diſpoſed, and all things ſo prepared in them, that there can be no inconvenience at all in it, but rather all the conveniencies for kneeling, that can be deſired. And therefore if any of you ſhall yet neglect to Kneel, while the Prayers are read, they will give us too much cauſe to call their Religion into queſtion, or to ſuſpect they have none at all. For if they had, they durſt not, they could not offer ſuch a manifeſt Affront to the great *Creator* of the World, as to carry

ſelves no otherwiſe while they pray to him, than as if they were converſing with their Fellow Creatures. But why do I ſpeak of their praying unto God? it is too much to be feared they do not pray at all, nor come to Church for any better purpoſe than only to ſee and be ſeen. I am ſure they perform no *Act* of external Worſhip of *Adoration* unto God, nor ſhew him that reſpect and reverence which is due unto him; and ſo give very great offence to all pious and devout Chriſtians.

Whereas if all and every perſon in the *Congregation*, would always be on their Knees, while they put up their petitions to the moſt high God, what a mighty advantage would this be, not only to every one in particular, but to the whole *Congregation* in general? For as every one would by this means keep his heart more ſteadfaſt in the true fear and

and dread of God, & likewiſe more certainly obtain the good things he prays for, as the fathers frequently aſſert: ſo the whole *Congregation* alſo would be very much *edified* by it. For by this means we ſhould excite and inflam each others Devotions, confirm and ſtrengthen one anothers Faith, and convince both our ſelves and all that ſee us, that *Religion* is indeed a ſerious thing; and that we believe it to be ſo, by our ſerving God with ſo much *reverence and godly fear*, as this humble poſture repreſenteth. And therefore as you tender the love of God, the credit of *Religion*, or the ſalvation of your own Souls, I beſeech you all in the name of him that made you, that whenſoever you come hither to pray unto him, you do it in that awful, lowly, and ſolemn maner, which our *Church* commandeth, and as becometh creatures, when you

you ſpeak to your *great* and *almighty* Creator; that ſo you may give true worſhip and honour unto him, and alſo receive that *benefit* and *edification* to your ſelves, which he hath promiſed and you expect from your Publick *Prayers*. This being certainly the moſt edifying poſture that you can poſſibly uſe upon ſuch occaſions.

From what we have hitherto diſcourſed concerning the *Language*, the *Matter*, the *Method*, and the *Manner*, *of Performing* Divine Service, as contained and preſcribed in the Book of *Common Prayer*, we may poſitively conclud that it agrees exactly with the *Rule* in my *text*, even that, *All things in it are done to edifying*: which was the thing I undertook to prove. I know that many other *Arguments* might be brought to ſhew the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the *Common Prayer*. But theſe already produced are *ſufficient* to

convince any ſober and conſidering *Chriſtian* of it. And if there be any here preſent who are not yet convinced by what they have heard of it, I deſire only one thing of them, and that is, That they would but make tryal of it for a while. For my Charity prompts me to believe that all the *Zeal* that ſome expreſs againſt the *Common Prayer*, and all that indifferency that is in others for it, proceeds only from their ignorance of what it is, or at leaſt from their want of an experimental knowledge of it. For let any Man that ſeriouſly minds the *Worſhip* of *God* and the *Salvation* of his *Soul* before all things elſe, let ſuch a one, I ſay, ſet himſelf in good earneſt to uſe the *Common Prayer*, as he ought to do for ſome conſiderable time, and I do not doubt but that by the bleſſing of God, he will find that Benefit and edification by it, that his own

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experience ſhall convince him of all that I have now ſaid, more than all the *Arguments* that I have, or any man in the *World* can ever produce to him. Some perhaps may think this to be a Paradox: But I do not queſtion but that many here preſent can atteſt it upon their own knowledge, Having found themſelves more confirmed in their *Faith*, more ſettled in their *Religion*, more humbled for their ſins, more ſupported under their troubles, more inflamed with *Love* to *God* and deſires of *Heaven*, every way more *Edifyed* by the conſtant uſe of *Common Prayer*, then they could ever have believed it poſſible to have been, except they had found it to have been ſo by their own *experience*.

Now theſe things being thus briefly conſidered, I ſhall obſerve only two things from them. The firſt is the extraordinary prudence

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as well as piety of our first *Reformers*, who first compiled the *Book* of *Common Prayer*, so exactly *Conformable* to the *Word* of *God* and that Apostolical *Canon* in my *Text*, which I cannot but ascribe to the same *extraordinary* aid and assistance from God, whereby they were afterwards enabled to suffer persecution, yea *Martyrdom* it self for his sake, and so to confirm what they have done with their own Blood. Which certainly is no small *commendation* of it.

The other thing I would observe unto you, is the reason, why the Devil hath had such a spight against the *Common Prayer*, ever since it was first made. For the more edifying it is to Gods People, the more destructive it must needs be of the Devils Kingdom. And therefore it is no wonder that he hath all along employed the utmost of his power and policy to blast its *Reputa-*

tion, and ſo to diſcourage and diſ ſwade *Men* from the uſe of it. And by the permiſſion of *God* for the *puniſhment* of this ungrateful *Nation*, he hath ſo far prevailed in his deſign, that the *Liturgy* hath been twice caſt out of the *Church*, ſince it was firſt brought into it, once in the *Reign* of Queen *Mary*, and then again in the days of King *Charles* the firſt.

In the Reign of Queen *Mary*, you all know, who were his *Inſtruments* in the doing of it, even the *Papiſts*. For they clearly and truly foreſaw, that their *Erroneous Opinions* could never be believed, nor their *Superſtitious Practices* obſerved in the *Nation*, ſo long as the *Common Prayer* was uſed. Foraſmuch as there is nothing in that but what is ſound and agreeable to the *Doctrine* of the Goſpel, and ſo contrary to the groundleſs *Opinions* which the *Church* of *Rome* would obtrude upon the

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World for *Articles* of *Faith*. And beſides that, there are many expreſſions purpoſely inſerted in it, to arm us againſt the Popes *Supremacy*, *Indulgences*, *Invocation* of *Saints*, *Tranſubſtantiation*, and other Popiſh *Errors*. So that it would have been impoſſible for the *Romiſh* Religion to be ever reſtored in the Nation, unleſs the *Common Prayer* was firſt removed. Which therefore they took care to have done as ſoon as poſſible. But within a few Years after, even the firſt of Queen *Elizabeth* it was brought in again. And as the *Reformation* was begun before, ſo from that time forward it was carried on and perfected chiefly by means of the *Common Prayer*. For it is very obſervable that in the Reign of King *Edward* the Sixth, and for ſeveral Years too of Queen *Elizabeth*, there was little or no preaching in moſt parts of the *Kingdom*, and

andfew then could read *Engliſh*, & yet by the conſtant and general uſe of the *Liturgy*, and *Gods Bleſſing* upon it, the whole *Nation was* ſo *edifyed* iu the true *Religion*, that there was ſcarce one in an hundred but forſook and abhorred all *Popiſh Doctrines* and *Superſtitions*: Which is an undeniable *Argument*, that in this reſpect alſo it is as *edifying*, as it is poſſible for a thing of that natnre to be. In ſo much that ſo long as the *Common Prayer* is uſed and frequented as it ought to be, it is morally impoſſible for Popery to get any ground amongſt us. But if this Bulwark were once removed (which God forbid) our grand *Adverſary* would ſoon accompliſh his malicious deſigns upon us one way or other.

This he knows well enough; and therefore hath left no ſtone unturned to effect it. But what he had done before

before by the *Papists*, he afterwards brought about again by other means in the Reign of King *Charles* the First. For by what kind of Spirit the *Common Prayer* was then cast out, you all know, and some of you found by woful experience. All that I shall say of it, is only this, That the same Spirit that then stirr'd up people so violently against the *Common Prayer*, stirr'd them up at the same time to Rebel against their King, to take away Mens Estates and Lives contrary to all Law and Justice; and at last to Murder one of the most pious Princes that ever lived. And whether that was the Spirit of Christ or Antichrist, God or the Devil, judge you. Be sure the consequents of its being laid aside at that time were very sad. For people being deprived of that whereby they should have been edified, were immediatly tossed to and fro with every wind

wind of Doctrine, until at length many of them fell into the moſt pernicious and damnable Hereſies that were ever heard of in the Church. Yea together with the Liturgy, they laid aſide all diſtinction betwixt ſacred and common things; by which means the whole Nation was in danger of being over-ſpread with profaneneſs aud irreligion,

But bleſſed be the Name of the moſt high God for it, he was once more pleaſed to appear for us, and in a miraculous manner to reſtore our *Common Prayer* to his Church, together with with our Gracious Soveraign to his Kidgdoms. But what ſhall we render to the Lord for ſo great a Bleſſing as this is? All that he expects, or we can give him for it, is only to make the beſt uſe of it that we can. This therefore is that which I now pray and beſeech you all for the future to do. *Do* not think it

it enough to be for the *Common Prayer*, and to come now and then to hear it. This you may do, as many do, and yet receive no more benefit by it; than as if there was none at all to be received. Which therefore can by no means be imputed to the *Common Prayer*, its ſelf, but to the negligence of thoſe that uſe it. Neither muſt you think it enough to talk high for it, or to rail at thoſe who are not ſo happy as to be rightly informed about it. But rather take all *opportunities* to inform them, and by all means poſſible to convince them, of the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of it, Which you can never do ſo effectualy, as by your out-ſtripping and exceeding them in Virtue and good Works. For this is and ever will be a plain demonſtration that the *Common Prayer* is indeed far more edifying, than thoſe new *Modes* of *Religion*, which they

they are ſo unhappily ſeduced into. That therefore you may do this, and ſo both experience in your *ſelves* and *demonſtrat* unto others, the *truth* and certainty of what you have now *heard*, *concerning* the *Common Prayer*. I deſire you to obſerve theſe few *Rules* in the uſing of it.

First, come not to our *Publick Prayers* only out of Cuſtom or for Faſhion ſake, as the manner of ſome is, but out of a ſincere obedience to *Gods Commands*, and with a ſure truſt and confidence in his *Promiſes* for his Bleſſing upon what you do. For which end it will be very good as you go to Church, to bethink your ſelves whether you are going, and what you are to do there; that ſo laying aſide all other buſineſs, you may put your ſelves into a right temper for ſo great a work.

Secondly

Secondly, Frequent our Publick Prayers as often as conveniently you can. The oftner you are at them, the better you will like them, and the more edified you wil be by them. And therefore do not ſatisfie your ſelves with hearing them once a week. In this City, as alſo in many other places of the Kingdom, eſpecially where there *are Cathedrals*, or *Collegiat-Churches*, you may enjoy the benefit of them publickly every day, and ſo keep your hearts continually in an holy and heavenly frame, and always live as becometh Chriſtians: And if you neglect ſuch opportunities as are now put into your hands, you will one day wiſh you had not; but then wiſhing will do no good.

Thirdly, If poſſible, come always at the beginning of *Divine Service*. Otherwiſe you will certainly miſs of ſomething that would have been e-

edifying to you, and perhaps of that, which at that time might have done you more good then all the reſt. Neither will you looſe the benefit only of part of it, but in ſome meaſure of the whole too. All the parts of it being linked together in ſo excellent a manner and method, that they influence and aſſiſt each other. So that nothing can be omitted either by *Miniſter* or *People*, but the whole will ſuffer by it, and loſe ſomething of that *Vertue* and *Efficacy*, which otherwiſe you will find in it.

Fourthly, All the while that you are in *Gods Houſe*, carry your ſelves as in his ſpecial preſence, and ſuitably to the work you are about; ſtanding while you praiſe God, and kneeling while you pray unto him, as our Church hath directed you. For though theſe may ſeem but little things in themſelves, yet they are

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of great conſequence, both to our worſhipping of God aright, and alſo to our being edified by what we do, as I have ſhewed before.

Laſtly, take ſpecial Care all along to keep your minds intent upon the matter in hand. When you confeſs your ſins to God, do it with an hearty and ſincere Repentance for all the *Errors* of your life paſt. When the *Abſolution* is pronounced, receive it with a firm and ſteadfaſt Faith in *Chriſt your Saviour*.

When you repeat or ſing the Hymns and Pſalms, raiſe up your Spirits as high as you can to joyn with thoſe above in praiſing and magnifying the Eternal God. When the Word of God is read, harken diligently unto it, and conſider ſeriouſly what he that made you ſaith to you, and requireth of you, and reſolve by his Bleſſing to believe and

and live accordingly. And all the while that you are upon your knees, putting up your petitions to the moſt high God, let your whole Souls be employed in it, earneſtly deſireing the good things you pray for at his Gracious hands, and humbly confideing on his faithful Promiſes for the granting of them. By this means you will perform reaſonable ſervice unto God, and by conſequence that which will be very acceptable unto him, and as profitable and edifying to your ſelves. Whereas they that do not *obſerve* this Rule, cannot be properly ſaid to pray, or ſerve God at all. And therefore it is no wonder that they come to Church, and hear the *Common Prayer* read, and yet are no way edified by it. Indeed it's impoſſible that they ſhould. For as much as all the *benefit* and *edification* that we can poſſibly receive from

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any of our *Devotions*, depends very much upon the due *intention of our minds* in the *performance* of them. To which, as I have ſhewn both a *Form* of *Prayer* in general, and ours in particular, is a very great help.

Do but obſerve theſe plain and neceſſary *Rules* in uſing of the *Common Prayer* (without which you cannot be truly ſaid to uſe, but rather to abuſe it) and you will ſoon find what I have ſaid about it to be true, even that *All things in it are done to Edifying*. And therefore I would to *God* that not only *you* that hear me at this time, but all the *people* of the *Nation*, could be once perſwaded to do ſo. What an holy *Nation*, what a peculiar *People* ſhould we then become? How *Pious* towards *God*? How *Loyal* to our *Soveraign*? How *Juſt* and *Charitable* to *one another*; For by our conſtant

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Worſhipping Almighty God, in ſo ſolemn and devout a *manner* as this is, our *hearts* would be over-awed with ſo great a *fear* of his *Divine Majeſty*, that we ſhould never *dare* willingly to offend *him*. Our *minds* would be *filled* and *impregnated* with ſuch a *ſenſe* of his *Power* aud *Sovereignity*, that we ſhould *honour* and *reverence* it in thoſe alſo whom he hath ſet over us. Our whole *Souls* would be *raiſed* up ſo much above the *World*, that we ſhould not do an ill *act* to gain it wholly to our ſelves. In ſhort, we ſhould be every day *edified* more and more in *Faith*, in *Love*, in *Humility*, in *Self denial*, in *Temperance*, in *Patience*, in all true *Grace* and *Vertue*: and ſo we ſhould go from *ſtrength* to *ſtrength*, from one *degree* of *grace* unto *another*, until at length we arrive at *Glory* and *Perfection* in the higheſt *Heavens*, where we ſhall ſpend *Eternity* its ſelf

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Praiſing and *Adoring* the moſt high *God*; as for all the other *Mercies* which he hath vouchſafed to us, ſo in a particular manner for our being *Members* of ſuch an *Apoſtolical Church* wherein all things are done to *edifying*.

Which God of his Infinite Mercy grant we may all do, in and through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory, World without end. *Amen*.

FINIS.

Praising and *Adoring* the most high *God*; as for all the other *Mercies* which he hath vouchsafed to us, so in a particular manner for our being *Members* of such an *Apostolical Church*, wherein all things are done to *edifying*.

Which God of his Infinite Mercy grant we may all do, in and through our Lord and Saviour Jesu Christ, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, World without end. *Amen.*

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